OPERATING GUIDELINES
SOUTHERN REGION
INCIDENT BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
April 2006 Revision

Enclosed are Operating Guidelines for Incident Business Administration activities within the Southern Region. These guidelines emphasize the critical financial and administrative procedures to be followed on incidents within the Southern Region. The April 2004 Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH) provides national direction. One of the primary objectives of these guidelines is to ensure that Agency Administrators (AA) and Incident Commanders (IC) are reviewing incident costs daily and documenting the reviews. These guidelines are also provided to support Incident Management Team operations and to provide consistency in incident business management operations throughout the region.

Any changes to these guidelines will be negotiated with the Agency Administrator (AA) and Incident Business Advisor (IBA) in advance. Cost efficiency and accountability is mandatory.

Regional Incident Business Specialist

The Regional Incident Business Specialist is responsible for the coordination and liaison of Incident Business administrative guidelines and practices for incidents within the Southern Region. This position will be a source of information for national and regional incident business knowledge. For the Southern Region:

Liz Kinney	Work phone:	678-320-3013
	Cell phone:	404-909-0262
Diane Taylor	Work phone:	678-320-3011
	Cell phone:	864-903-2570

Delegation of Authority/Responsibility

The hosting incident unit will complete the IBA Delegation of Authority (appendix A) and the contact tables below before issuing these guidelines to an incident management team (IMT).

Title	Name	Cell Phone
Incident Business Advisor (IBA)		
Administrative Officer (AO)		

The names and phone numbers for local incident administrative contacts are provided in the following table (hosting incident unit to provide):

Title	Name	Cell Phone
Budget Officer		
Acquisition/Contracting Officer		
GIS		
Law Enforcement (Special Agent or Patrol Captain)		
Other		

<u>Incident Business Advisor Responsibilities</u>.

One or more fully qualified IBAs normally will be brought in to assist the Regional Incident Business Specialist on Type II or larger incidents. The IBA works under the direct supervision of the Regional Incident Business Specialist and provides needed coordination with the Incident Management Team(s) and Area Command(s) during the incident.

The IBA will:

- ✓ Provide recommendations on administrative issues needing resolution.
- ✓ Be a source of national, regional, and local knowledge.
- ✓ Be a helpful consultant (partner) to the incident's command and general staff.
- ✓ The IBA will be a person with extensive incident experience and is able to effectively work with people.

As a minimum, the Finance Section Chief will arrange for a **<u>daily</u>** flow of information with the IBA. This will include a report of current progress of incident business administration operations, including copies of the current cost projections and obligations.

The Finance Section Chief will contact the IBA 48 hours prior to demobilization to ensure all transitioned financial and administrative processes have been finalized. The IBA will follow-up with the Regional Incident Business Specialist to ensure a smooth transition with the IMT. All unresolved or open financial items will be documented and the individual responsible for the follow-up action will be identified.

The IBA will participate in the exit interview of each assigned IMT. The IBA will provide a narrative statement of significant events that occurred during the incident, <u>not</u> routine logistical information. The narrative should include a brief summary of "lessons learned", things that went well, and things that need improvement or could be done better. The report will be submitted to the Regional Incident Business Specialist within 30 days after the team departs the incident.

The IBA will ensure that financial records are complete and the audit of OF-288's, OF-286's etc. (ITS/ICARS information) left on the incident are documented as complete through the end of the incident for the Incident Management Team (<u>negotiate actual date with IMT</u>). The Finance Section Chief will **<u>certify</u>** this in the **<u>Team Transition Plan</u>**.

The AO/IBA will check the incident property records to ensure that property is recovered and/or disposed of properly on the incident. Property remaining on the incident is documented and **<u>certified</u>** in the **<u>Team Transition Plan</u>**.

<u>Cost Containment</u>

Cost containment in the Southern Region is a high priority. Daily cost validation to ensure the Mission Assignment is valid will be done by projecting costs for the duration incident based on operational projections.

In dealing with cost containment issues, it is important for the IBA to be a partner with the IMT for effective cost containment balances, taking into consideration the particular issues and circumstances relative to the incident. This requires action to highlight inappropriate or questionable procurement requests as well as ineffective use of items under contract, plus exploration of alternatives, whereby joint IC and IBA decision can be made.

Focus on high cost resources, under-utilized equipment, extravagant purchases, sensitive items and property accountability issues. IBAs should raise unresolved cost concerns to the Regional Incident Business Management Specialist, Liz Kinney 678-320-3013 wk or 404-909-0262 cell, who will take the lead to involve other regional staff as needed to ensure a timely resolution of the issue.

Supplemental Foods

The NWCG Supplemental Food Policy dated March 10, 2003, is in effect in R8.

Procurement

Upon arrival on the host forest the Finance Section will be given an Incident Service and Supply Plan (if one has been established). If available, an employee from the Acquisition staff will deliver the book in person to discuss information in the plan.

Strict adherence to procedures and policies will be followed. NO specialized items will be purchased without approval from the IBA. This includes, but not limited to jump drives, cell phones, microphones, antenna's. Crew replacement items will only be supplied from approved NFES. See attached crew replacement policy.

Many of the normal restrictions on purchasing supplies and services apply when buying for incident operations. Some exceptions exist, such as commissary items and items in lieu of per diem necessary for operating an incident camp. Procurement personnel should consult with the Incident Business Advisor before purchasing items of questionable nature or questionable quantities.

Restricted items are listed in Appendix B.

The PUL should communicate with the Supply Unit Leader and Buying Team Leader throughout the incident. The open flow of communication between these parties will facilitate acquisition needs, as well as property tracking.

Motel and meal tickets may be used or another approved documentation system. If a method other than motel and meal tickets is used, the method must be approved by the IBA in advance. Other approved methods are electronic spreadsheets with room number, names etc. which are receipted by the Logistics Section Chief or Facilities Unit Leader.

Cell Phones

Use of personal cell phones for official business is <u>not</u> authorized and will <u>not</u> be reimbursed. Resource Orders authorizing cell phones are for government owned cell phones, these phones should be on nation wide plans, where no roaming or long distance charges are incurred. Federal Government cell phones are authorized for use on incidents. Use of Federal cell phones on incidents may be reimbursed by sending ASC a cost adjustment from project funds to appropriate fire job code. State Government cell phone use on incidents may be reimbursed depending on whether it is authorized by an existing Co-op agreement.

Purchase vs Rental of Equipment

In accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulations, the decision to rent or purchase equipment should be made on a case-by-case basis through evaluation of comparative costs and other factors. The following are factors that should be considered:

- Estimate the length of time the equipment will be used
- Cumulative rental payments for the estimated period of use
- Net purchase price
- Transportation and installation costs
- Maintenance and other service costs
- Whether a rental-with-purchase option is available

- Cost of handling and disposal following the incident

The length of time the equipment will be utilized is often unknown. The use of day/week rental rates may help lower overall costs. Examples of items to consider purchasing: fax machines, inexpensive printers, light towers, tables, and chairs. **Remember that when a purchase card is used to rent equipment and the cardholder is released it is the responsibility of that cardholder to, either close out the rental agreement and turn it over to the next purchase cardholder, or be responsible to close out that agreement from their home unit.**

Buying Unit Procedures

As a minimum, when an Incident Management Team is assigned, a Buying Team will be assigned. Buying team members are authorized to use their purchase cards/checks during any incident.

The Incident Business Advisor and/or appropriate official will consult with the Incident Management Team and agency administrator to decide when to release a Buying Team.

The Buying Team Leader should visit the incident administrative sites and establish open lines of communication with the incident supply unit and the incident procurement unit leader. **The B/T Leader should establish a direct ordering system between the supply unit and the buying team to expedite procurement resource orders.** This should be coordinated with Dispatch so everyone understands the ordering process. On incidents where a direct ordering system is not practical, orders should be processed through expanded dispatch. Supplies available through the national cache system should be ordered through established channels.

Land Use Agreements

Land use agreements are used on incidents when there is a need for a formal written agreement authorizing the IMT to utilize the land or property of a private, commercial, or other government agency to conduct incident operations. Land use agreements are normally simple agreements covering the terms and conditions for use of the property. This includes determining pre-use and post-use condition of the property, defining the limits of use, establishing a cost rate, and other appropriate conditions of use. The agreement is signed by and is binding on both parties. For the Government the terms of the agreement including cost are negotiated by the PUL assigned to the IMT or the Contracting Officer (CO) assigned to the Buying Team. Also, the agreement is signed by the PUL or B/T CO on behalf of the Government. An agreement must be established even if there is no cost involved or reimbursement required protecting the interests of both the Government and the other party. In most cases payment for costs incurred under an agreement are paid by the PUL or the Buying Team. Payments that cannot be made at the incident will be sent to ASC for processing.

Property Management

The Incident Administrative Agency expects the incident management team to place a high priority on property management. Included in this expectation is the need for the Finance Section to review property issuance (including gas/oil/wcf/other), sign out, and return procedures to ensure proper accountability. The buying team leader should assume responsibility for coordinating with the incident on property tracking. Buying teams are responsible for ensuring that accountable property which they have purchased is tracked and the information available to the incident unit for record keeping purposes.

During the demobilization process, Agency specific forms (e.g., Forest Service AD-112), will be processed when items are not returned to supply. These forms will always be signed by the employee's supervisor.

If property items are not returned by vendors assigned to the incident, a system will be established to ensure the value of missing items is deducted from the payment invoices.

All property treated as replacement will be so described on Agency specific forms, Waybill, or left on the incident for rehab or mop up (manifest to the incident unit). All property left on the unit at the close of the incident, will be properly temporarily transferred on the Agency's form.

The Southern Region has established an Incident Replacement Policy that will be used as a guideline for Supply Unit Leaders and Ordering Managers. See Appendix C

Compensation for Injury and Agency-Provided Medical Care

The IBA will be the contact for compensation and medical treatment. All required copies of injury compensation forms will be forwarded to the employee's home unit as soon as possible for disposition. The Incident Management Teams Comp/Claims Unit Leader ensures all original documents are forwarded to the employee's home unit.

All medical services, agency-provided medical care agreements, physicians, burn center, forms, etc., are included in the Emergency Incident Acquisition Plan that will be given to all Finance Sections. If the plan is not readily available, contact the assigned Buying Unit or Incident Agency's Acquisition Section for a copy of the information.

Claims

Contract Disputes Act Claims: Procurement Unit Leaders, with delegated authority, are responsible for settling all Contract Disputes Act (CDA) claims involving equipment agreements at the incident. The PUL or buying team CO and Finance Section Chief shall coordinate with the agency contracting office or the Regional Buying Team Coordinator any claims that cannot be resolved at the incident.

At the end of the incident all actual and potential non-CDA claims will be fully documented and sent to the Claims Manager at ASC. Use of Incident Case File Envelope (OF 314) is strongly recommended

Tort/Employee Claims: In the event of a Tort or employee claim on an incident, the Comp/Claims Unit Leader assigned to the IMT will gather all pertinent documentation concerning the claim and submit to the Finance Section Chief (FSC) for review. The FSC will review the claims file to ensure all appropriate documentation is included in the file. The Comp/Claims Unit Leader will then submit the claims file to the Claims Manager at the Albuquerque Service Center (ASC) for Forest Service employeees. An ASC Claims Manager will be available to support the Comp/Claims Unit Leader when issues arise that might require research of unusual situations, authorities, etc. To contact the ASC Claims office phone: 1-877-372-7248. DOI employee claims will be sent back to the home agency for filing.

Before leaving the incident, the Comp/Claims Unit Leader will audit the documentation and prepare a log of all claims, defining what's included and what is left to collect on each claim. The case files should be enclosed in an Incident Case File Envelope (OF-314). The log and envelopes will be given to the Regional Incident Business Advisor at the end of the incident. A copy will also be included in the incident package.

<u>Incident Agency Payments</u>

After payment packets are reviewed, they are to be forwarded directly to the Albuquerque Service Center to ensure timely payment to vendors and contractors as follows:

As of May 2006 - all Casual Hire, EERA Payments and other emergency incident payments/billings send payments to:

USDA Forest Service
Albuquerque Service Center
Incident Business
101B Sun Ave., NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone: 1-877-372-7248
Fax: 1-866-816-9532
Email: ASC_IPC@fs.fed.us

Invoices submitted at closeout of the incident are to be sent directly to ASC by a Finance Section employee able to discuss incomplete payments or those requiring additional clarification. **All payment packages will be reviewed to ensure they adhere to IIBMHB Chapter 27.0 guidelines**.

<u>Cost Reporting and Accruals</u>

The Finance Section Chief and/or Cost Unit Leader will work with the Regional Cost Unit Leader to report incident costs on a daily basis using the ICARS Weekly Summary Reports. The first report will be due within 72 hours from the start of the incident. In addition, both the ICARS Accrual Report and the Accrual Daily Report should be run daily and submitted to the Incident Payment Center at the Albuquerque Service Center . These reports can either be faxed or posted to the www.agencydocs.com website for retrieval. The host Forest or the Regional Incident Business Specialist will ensure a folder is set up at agencydocs.com.

<u>Pay Rates for Casual Hires</u>

Pay rates for casual hires will be determined based on the current Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, Pay Plan for Emergency Workers (Casuals). **Note: In all circumstances, the pay rate for the Category AD-K Exception Rates will be approved by either the agency Administrator or the Fire Staff Officer.**

<u>End of Pay Period Time & Attendance Reports</u>

It is critical that T&As are processed in a timely manner. Normally, T&As will be faxed to the employee's home unit. However, if there are problems or issues related to processing T&As Finance Sections will contact the Incident Business Advisor to determine the most efficient and effective means for processing/communicating pay information at the end of each pay period.

Law Enforcement

All criminal investigations will be conducted by the assigned criminal investigators and law enforcement officers, and will be supervised by the Assistant Special Agent in Charge for Enforcement Operations, Tracy Perry 404-347-2756.

Other investigations (claims, motor vehicle accidents, etc.) will be done by law enforcement or finance personnel assigned to the incident. Also, other law enforcement work (security, traffic control, etc.) will be assigned to the incident.

Closeout

The final Finance Package will meet the new uniform filing scheme for incident records packages. At the end of the incident, the final incident package will be forwarded either by mail, or turned in at the closeout to the host Forest.

The Incident Business Advisor will participate in the exit interview of each assigned Incident Management Team. If time permits, the Incident Business Advisor will provide a verbal assessment of (1) commendable performance, (2) things that went well, and (3) things needing improvement.

APPENDIX A

INCIDENT BUSINESS ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

File Code:	**6520/5130**	**Date:**	
Route To:			

Subject: **Delegation of Authority, Incident Business Advisor**

To: **Incident Command Teams, _______________________ National Forest**

This letter authorizes ***(name)*__________________________________** to act as an Incident Business Advisor (IBA) for the ***(unit name)*** __________________________________ and Incident Command Teams assigned to incidents on the Forest. The IBA works as a liaison and advisor between the Forest and the Incident Team(s) for all issues related to incident business management.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Maintaining close communication with the Incident Commander, Finance Section Chief, and other members of the Incident Command Team, Area Command Team, the Ranger District(s) and the administrative sections on the Forest
- Attends incident planning meetings. Represents the Forest and assists the Incident Management Team in strategic planning, transitions or significant changes in status.
- Provides guidance to Forest AO/AA for the need to assign a Liaison to ensure all payment packages are complete prior to transmittal to National Payment Centers.
- Represents the Forest in cost management activities and works with the team to ensure cost control measures and other fiscal controls are in place. Specifically, the IBA will monitor, track and document their involvement in cost containment items such as WFSA's, Cost Share Agreements, and daily costs/obligations ICARS reports, etc.
- Will review questionable orders as requested by the Buying team or expanded dispatch, and hold until clarification is made with the IMT. Questionable items, which cannot be resolved between the IMT and the

IBA, will be discussed with the Agency Administrator and Forest Administrative Officer for resolution.

- Provides advice to the Forest and the Incident Team(s) concerning local, regional and national incident business management policies. The IBA will provide communication links, guidance, and advice to facilitate efficiency in business management practices.
- Reviews incident business administration practices to ensure compliance with approved practices, and obtains necessary information or interpretations of laws, regulations, and agreements as needed to efficiently and effectively accomplish administrative practices.
- Specifically monitors business administration activities at Expanded Dispatch, Buying Teams, R&R sites, ICP or any other sites that may support the incident. The IBA has full access to any and all administrative functions of the incident, and is expected to make frequent site visits to all support locations.
- Advises the Incident Commander, Forest Supervisor, Agency Administrator, Administrative Officer and/or interagency coordinating groups such as MAC and Area Command teams of the need for special support units such as Buying Units, Payment Liaison Teams, Cost Share Teams, Claims Teams, or other support as needed.
- Participates in the Incident Management Team initial briefings and exit meeting and provides a critique of team incident business activities to both the Agency Administrator and the team.
- Represents the Forest in other related activities as needed and identified by the Agency Administrator or as requested by the Incident Commander or Area Command.
- May serve in the same role as identified above in BAER and post fire activities.
- Provides briefings to the Forest Supervisor, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Agency Administrator, MAC, Area Command and Forest IBA as needed.

The Forest Agency Administrator is the primary point of contact, but coordination will be maintained with ___________________________________.

Forest Supervisor

cc: Unit Managers

APPENDIX B
Restricted Items

The following items are either restricted from purchasing, or limited in some manner. Take into account local considerations (i.e. a remote location with limited services and supplies verse being in or adjacent to a full service community where the needed resources are readily available) when applying this direction. Assigned Supply Unit Leaders and/or buying unit teams will refer to this list when purchasing supplies and services for incident operations.

- ✓ Alcoholic beverages of any type are prohibited.
- ✓ Local purchase of newspapers for the incident will be limited to 5 per day per incident up to 250 individuals then limited to 1 for every 50 personnel per day. (Type II or greater)
- ✓ Items that may be provided by the Commissary Operations:
- ✓ Clothing, buttons, stickers, hats, etc., with special or specific printing, coloring, or logo's. Bathing suits or other special clothing to be worn in R&R centers and/or incident camps.
- ✓ Pillows or sleeping bags (other than regular GSA, fire cache type).
- ✓ Orders for specific magazines, newspapers, or other literature.
- ✓ Plants & Flowers
- ✓ WCF and GSA Vehicle modifications/repairs will be coordinated through the local fleet manager.
- ✓ Barbers will only be provided for the military at their request.
- ✓ Fees for the use of recreational facilities (i.e. hot springs) unless associated with R&R.
- ✓ Massage or other therapist services.

<u>Note</u>: **All purchased equipment and personal property will be transferred to the fire cache and will not be retained on or by the District. All rental equipment, with owner's concurrence, will have a lease purchase clause inserted in the procurement document to allow maximum flexibility to meet cost effectiveness goals.**

The following items may be purchased or rented, but with the following limitations:

- ✓ Chairs: Use local cache. If additional chairs are needed, rent with an option to buy.
- ✓ Trailers and motor homes will be used for offices only, not for sleeping purposes.
- ✓ Cots, other than ordered through the cache system, will be justified and approved in writing by the incident commander for health and safety reasons.
- ✓ The ISO must approve all Automated Data Processing Equipment requiring technical approval.
- ✓ The Forest or Regional Telecommunication Manager must approve all telecommunications equipment.

<u>Specialty Items:</u>

The Agency Administrator or/IBA has the authority to establish additional purchasing restrictions or limitations on specialty items, such as:

Cameras: digital, video, still	Cellular Telephones
Satellite Telephones	GPS Units
Laptop Computers	Personal Digital Assistant
(electronic organizers)	
Handheld radios	Scanners
Facsimile machines	Copy machines
Printers	

*Procurement officials must follow agency regulations when purchasing any of the above items. (Property will be contacted to issue property numbers as required.)

Appendix C
Incident Replacement Policy

The Team follows the incident replacement process as outlined in the NWCG National Fire Equipment System Catalog on page 47.

- The Supply Unit Leader approves replacement requests.
- If equipment and supplies are available at the incident for replacement, the request is filled at the incident.
- If equipment and supplies cannot be obtained before requesting resource is demobilized, and OF-315 Incident Replacement Requisition will be completed. S numbers will be given for each replacement item.

The process for approving requests follows:

- Chainsaw part requests will be reviewed and approved by the Chainsaw Repair Specialist at the supply cache or, if not available, the Receiving and Distribution Manager.
- Radio or other communication equipment will be reviewed and approved by the Communication Unit Leader.
- **All non-standard cache items such as eagle packs, sleeping bags, kevlar pants, headlamps, and other specialized equipment will not be replaced on the incident. These are home unit expenses charged to preparedness (WFPR).**
- The incident replacement request will be signed by the Supply Unit Leader and faxed to Expanded dispatch for S numbers.
- This process may apply to repairable items.

The process to receive S numbers for replacement items can take time.

IHC are to provide the Supply Unit Leader an OF-315 Incident Replacement form at least two shifts prior to demob.

What does this mean to you………

- **Expect to receive a like item from the "cache"**
- **Expect to be denied specialty item replacement**
- **Supplies used on the fire will come from stock available in supply or through the OF-315 resource order**
- **Outdated items or property that is worn out (i.e. outdated radios, GPS units, bags, tents) will not be replaced**
- **Expect to complete proper paperwork before lost or destroyed government property items are replaced by the incident**